

Fuels and Fire Behavior Advisory

Southern Area

Southern Appalachian Mountains

October 23 – November 06, 2016



Subject: Elevated Fire Danger due to lack of rainfall and intensifying drought.

Discussion: An area, ranging from severe to exceptional drought, with Energy Release Component values above the 97th percentile currently exists over an area covering a large portion of the Southern Area. Some of these areas have observed 50 to 60 percent of normal rainfall over the past 6 months.

Difference from normal conditions: Lack of normal rainfall coupled with above average temperatures and below normal humidity values have raised fire danger indices across the advisory area to historic levels. In conjunction with elevated fire danger, the fall leaf drop has started across the area and adds dead fuels to an already volatile fire environment.

Concerns to Firefighters and the Public: Any fire in this area will be very resistant to control efforts. Expect complete consumption of fuels down to mineral soil or rock, frequent torching, and increased spotting. Fire intensities will be higher than normal which will likely preclude direct attack of fires. Expect the need for extended mop-up. The leaf drop will elevate Rates of Spread from those observed over the past few weeks. Expect an increase in long duration fires; with heavy fuels being available to burn and leaves coming off of trees expect a higher than normal probability of re-burn on contained fires.

Mitigation Measures: Do not expect any fire to be routine. Be prepared to utilize indirect tactics with extended mop-up. Also, practice good, basic fire tactics such as anchor and flank. Utilization of aviation assets may be needed to cool the edge of the fire, allowing ground crews to get close. Utilize aerial supervision to help direct crews and keep them informed on fire behavior. Ensure that LCES is in place before engaging on any fire. Remember to STOP, THINK and TALK before you ACT...actively look for ways to minimize risk to firefighters in what is forecast to be a period of very high fire danger.

Area of Concern: Alabama, Mississippi, Central and north Georgia, Tennessee and the mountain areas of Western South Carolina and North Carolina.

